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REPRESENTATIVE
**DAN
KRISTIANSEN**
Update from the 2006 Session

39th Legislative District

Winter 2006

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

While the 2006 legislative session is intended to be much shorter than last year's – the state Constitution sets a 60-day limit, compared to 105 – I'm hoping we can get much more done.

The decisions made last session were focused, unfortunately, on lots of new government spending, new tax increases to support that spending and a transportation package that pretty much ignored the most pressing needs of our district.

This session my top priority continues to be the expansion of jobs and the economy in our areas of Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom and King counties. But I'm also working to address the vehicle safety concerns on U.S. Highway 2 and get tougher on the public safety concerns we see in the headlines every day: sex offenders, meth-amphetamine, identity theft and auto theft. I'm supporting efforts to repeal the tax increases adopted in 2005 and rein in government spending, and my "mini GI bill" legislation that would help military veterans go to college is moving through the lawmaking process.

I'd appreciate it if you would take a few minutes to read this report, and check my web page or TVW for regular video updates on the session. And please, don't hesitate to contact me if you want to share your opinion or need my help dealing with a state agency. I'm here to serve you.

Sincerely,

Rep. Dan Kristiansen





Update from the 2006 Session

My commitment to you:

Here are several of the many issues I'll be working on this session (if you attended the citizen meeting we had in Skagit County last fall, you'll recognize these priorities). All will benefit people in our district.

Secure funding for safety projects on U.S. Highway 2 ●●●●●●●●●●

I understand why so much money is going to the Alaskan Way viaduct, SR 520 bridge and I-90, but our district's major highway – a major east-west corridor for our state – needs attention too. It recorded 15 deaths and nearly 5,500 personal injuries from collisions between 1993 and 2004. Three local people were lost to fatal accidents just recently. I've taken two steps to address this. First, I and Rep. Pearson are asking the House Transportation Committee to appropriate \$700,000 to complete the state safety development plan for 45 miles of U.S. 2 between Snohomish and Skykomish. This would result in solutions for making the road safer and easier to drive. Second, there's a deadline tied to the \$2 billion earmarked for the viaduct, and if it's missed the money will be freed up for other projects; I've asked that U.S. 2 be put on the list.

Put government on a budget by restoring voter-approved tax and spending limits ●●

The limits set in Initiative 601 were radically changed or suspended last year by the majority party and the governor so it could raise taxes and spending. A return to the original limits would protect taxpayers. With the state now forecasting a budget surplus (on paper) of nearly a billion and a half dollars, plenty of folks with special interests are coming to legislators this session to seek funding for their projects and causes. I know how our economy goes in cycles, and how the real estate market and construction activity will cool. This is not the time to make new spending commitments.

Protect our kids from sex offenders by passing "Jessica's Law Plus" ●●●●●●●●

Protecting our children is the most important job we have – and no one should put a price on it. House Bill 2476, based on Florida's Jessica Lunsford Act, would give Washington the nation's

toughest law against sex offenders. It would require prison terms of at least 25 years for the sexual victimization of a child younger than 15 – regardless of whether the convicted offender is a stranger or someone who knows the victim. It also would step up monitoring of sex predators so authorities know where these people are.

Get government out of the way of job growth by removing the regulatory burden on small business, repealing the death tax, and reforming unemployment insurance ●●●●●●●●●●

More jobs mean a better outlook for working families. But the discouraging weight and cost of the regulations put on small business is a drag on job growth. Also, the amount of revenue available to pay for public services is predicated on having a strong economy. I firmly believe legislation that's good for Washington employers, especially the Main Street, mom-and-pop businesses that employ the majority of our residents, is also good for our state's education, health care and transportation systems. I'm sponsoring several measures that will help, including House Bills 2772 and 3051, which would simplify and expand the tax exemption for hiring of new employees.

AIM for safer neighborhoods through enhanced penalties for Auto theft, Identity theft and Methamphetamine production ●●

Think about how these three crimes together affect the lives of so many in Washington. Auto theft is begging for the Legislature's attention, now that our state's embarrassingly weak penalties have allowed auto theft to become an industry. Did you know it normally takes seven convictions before the typical auto thief is sent to prison? ID theft may be the fastest-growing and most costly crime we face. It can happen to any of us. We propose penalties that will help us protect people's privacy and get a handle on ID theft. And then there's methamphetamine: several communities in our district have made great strides in combating meth, but the Legislature could do much more to help.



REPRESENTATIVE
DAN
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Rep. Kristiansen, right, has introduced legislation to increase the number of higher education tuition waivers available to vets. Ernie Butler from the Northwest Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America, left, and other veterans have come to Olympia to testify in support of the “mini GI bill.”

Allow citizens and their elected representatives, not the courts, to decide the definition of marriage ●●●●●●

Washington's law defending traditional marriage was twice adopted with bipartisan legislative support in 1998, once to send the bill to the governor and once to override his veto of it. If a court decision overturns any part of the law (and a relevant case is before the state Supreme Court as this is written) it's appropriate for the Legislature to work on a remedy by amending the law, rather than let the court ruling serve as the law.



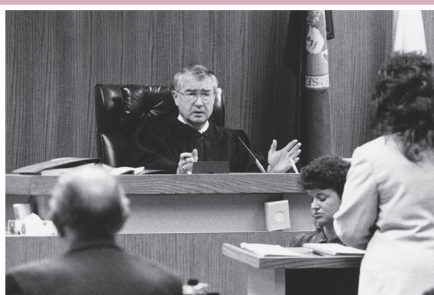
Require our colleges and universities to reserve tuition waivers for veterans

State law allows our higher education institutions to waive all or part of the tuition and fees for eligible veterans, but the dollar value of the waivers is left completely up to each institution. Last year I introduced House Bill 2233, which would require that veterans receive at least 10 percent, by value, of the tuition waivers, reductions or exemptions granted by our state's public colleges and universities. This would greatly increase the benefit of the waiver program to our vets – I think of it as a “mini GI Bill.” HB 2233 has already received a public hearing before the House Higher Education Committee, and the word is getting out into the veterans’ community. I’m optimistic it will become law this year.



Strengthen the family farm by providing tax relief, allowing families to use their land as intended, and ensuring access to water ●●●●●●●●●●

Agriculture is a mainstay of our district economy as well as Washington's top job-producing industry. Yet the Legislature has not given it the attention or assistance provided to other industries in Washington, such as aerospace and computer software. A first step was taken in the opening week of the session, when we eliminated the sales and use tax from off-road (dyed) diesel. But that's just a start. Our state's water policies remain so inflexible that they discourage conservation and best use; the Legislature needs to take politics out of the policies set by the Department of Ecology.





REPRESENTATIVE DAN KRISTIANSEN

Stay up to date with my video news reports!

Because this is an election year, state law limits the amount of legislative information I can provide to you through mailings like this. However, I can respond to questions about specific issues. Also, regular updates on the session are as close as your computer – or your TV, depending on where you reside (broadcast times subject to change).

Visit either of my web pages:

<http://hrc.leg.wa.gov/members/kristiansen.htm>

<http://www1.leg.wa.gov/House/kristiansen/>

and click on the link to my video.

- **Channel 3, parts of Snohomish and Skagit counties:** the Arlington-based local events channel airs my report at 5 p.m. Tuesdays, 7 p.m. Thursdays and 3 p.m. Saturdays.
- **Channel 21, Lake Stevens/Monroe/Sultan/Snohomish:** My reports air at 1 a.m., 4 a.m., 8 a.m., 1 p.m., 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. daily.
- **Channel 21, Skagit County:** the county government channel, which airs my report daily at 5:30 and 11:30 a.m., and 5:30 and 11:30 p.m.
- **Channel 77, part of Snohomish County:** the Everett-based public access channel reaches up to Arlington and over to Monroe and airs my report at 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays.



Maintain access for off-road vehicles

Last year the Legislature created a task force to study the issue of managing nuisance noise from off-road vehicles (ORVs). I made sure to get a seat on the task force, because ORVs are not only part of life for my family – they're an important factor in our district's economy and allow people with limited mobility to enjoy outdoor recreation. This session I expect we will pursue small but responsive changes in the standards for ORV noise, balanced by significant improvements regarding ORV access.



Rep. Kristiansen, shown testifying at a committee hearing, has asked for funding to complete the safety study of U.S. Highway 2. It will help in making badly needed improvements to this vital east-west corridor through the 39th District.

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